

## Flavin, Judd, McCracken, Sandback

15 November–21 December 2018  
5–6/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central

Opening reception: Thursday 15 November, 6–8 PM  
Press preview: Wednesday 14 November, 3 PM



Dan Flavin, *untitled*, 1974. © 2018 Stephen Flavin/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

David Zwirner Hong Kong is pleased to present an exhibition of work by **Dan Flavin** (1933–1996), **Donald Judd** (1928–1994), **John McCracken** (1934–2011), and **Fred Sandback** (1943–2003), four American artists associated with Minimalism, one of the most significant artistic developments of the late twentieth century. Each artist will be represented by a focused presentation of his work in a single room, allowing visitors to experience both the commonalities and distinctions in the individual approaches to reductive form, material, color, and space.

Since its inception, David Zwirner has featured critically acclaimed exhibitions devoted to the work of artists associated with Minimal art and is recognized as one of the foremost international galleries to present this work to the public. Highlighting historically significant installations, this exhibition will be the first major presentation of Minimal art to be on view in Hong Kong.

The term Minimalism came to denote a new abstract style of work that emerged in New York and Los Angeles in the 1960s and which radically reconfigured the possibilities of sculpture. This work tended to consist of singular or repeated geometric forms and was often made using industrial or commercially available materials. By alluding to nothing other than its own literal, physical presence as form in space, Minimal art stood in stark contrast to the emotive, gestural Abstract Expressionist painting and sculpture of the 1940s and 1950s that preceded it.

With the intention of creating straightforward work that could assume a direct material and physical “presence” without recourse to grand philosophical statements, **Donald Judd** eschewed the classical ideals of representational sculpture to create a rigorous visual vocabulary that sought clear and definite objects as its primary mode of articulation. Judd’s oeuvre has come to define what has been referred to as Minimal art—a label to which the artist strongly objected on the grounds of its generality. Throughout his career, he endeavored to produce objects that were entirely self-referential, writing in 1968, “A shape, a volume, a color, a surface is something itself. It shouldn’t be concealed as part of a fairly different whole.”<sup>1</sup> Judd began his career as an art critic, continuing to write about the work of his peers throughout his career. His influential writings, including his now canonical essay “Specific Objects,” published in 1965, grappled with questions of the moment, helping to define the art of his era. On view in this exhibition will be a selection of Judd’s

<sup>1</sup> Donald Judd, “Statement” (1968), in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959–1975* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 196.

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Left: John McCracken, *Untitled*, 1982. Polyester resin, fiberglass, and plywood, 93 × 15 1/2 × 1 3/4 inches (236.2 × 39.4 × 4.4 cm)

Right: Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1985. Galvanized iron and transparent light blue acrylic sheet, 5 7/8 × 27 × 24 inches (14.9 × 68.6 × 61 cm)

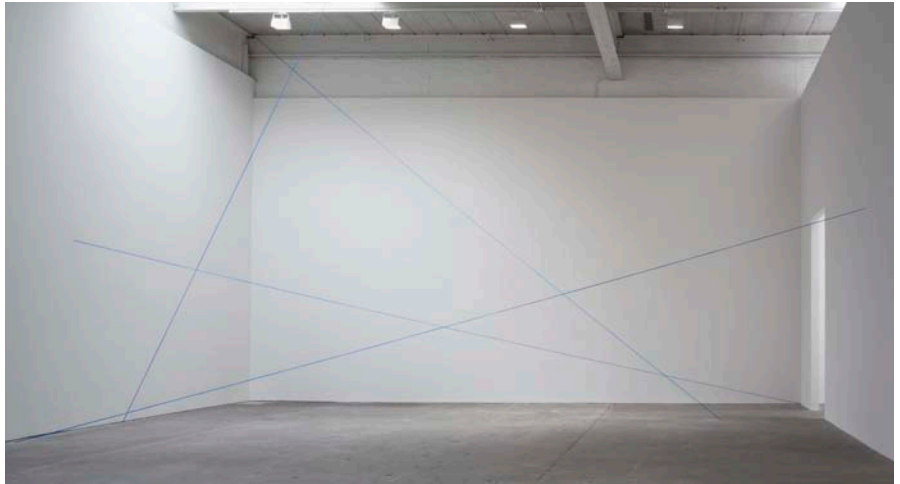
most significant and influential forms, including a “stack” in Cor-ten steel—six horizontally oriented units set equally apart, each of which juxtaposes the Cor-ten support with backing made from black acrylic sheets. Also presented will be a “progression,” which consists of a series of stainless steel rectangular forms that are connected by a square, anodized aluminum pipe that is flush with the front and top edges of the work and mounted horizontally on a wall. Beginning in 1964, progressions based on various mathematical sequences became a central motif in Judd’s work, and he continued to make them throughout his career.

From 1963, when he conceived *the diagonal of May 25, 1963 (to Constantin Brancusi)*, a single gold fluorescent lamp that is installed on a diagonal on the wall—a work which marks the artist’s first use of fluorescent light alone—until his death in 1996, **Dan Flavin** produced a singularly consistent and prodigious body of work that utilized commercially available fluorescent lamps to create installations, or “situations,” as he preferred to call them, of light and color. On view will be a large-scale untitled “barrier” by the artist from 1974, shown here for the first time since its original presentation at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, in 1975. The work cuts across the expanse of the gallery and dramatically bathes the space in pink fluorescent light, physically blocking access to part of the space and altering the viewer’s perception of the surrounding architecture. Flavin’s barriers, the first of which was executed in 1966, are among the artist’s most significant bodies of work. As site-specific, modular, and serial structures, these works demonstrate Flavin’s centrality to Minimal and Conceptual art movements of the 1960s and 1970s and moreover count among the earliest examples of what is now commonly referred to as “installation art.”

**John McCracken** likewise occupies a singular position within the recent history of American art, as his work combines the restrained formal qualities of Minimalist sculpture with a distinctly Los Angeles sensibility expressed through color, form, and finish. McCracken developed his early sculptural work while studying painting at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland in the late 1950s and early 1960s. While experimenting with increasingly three-dimensional canvases, the artist began to produce objects made with industrial materials, including plywood, sprayed lacquer, and pigmented resin, creating the highly reflective, smooth surfaces for which he was to become known. As he explained, “I think of color as being the structural material I use to build the forms I am interested in.”<sup>2</sup> On view will be a group of the artist’s “planks”—his signature sculptural form. First generated in 1966, these works comprise a narrow, monochromatic, rectangular

<sup>2</sup> John McCracken: *Sketchbook* (Santa Fe: Radius Books, 2008), p. 66 1/2.

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Fred Sandback, *Untitled (Sculptural Study, Four-part Mikado Construction)*, c. 1991/2011. Aqua acrylic yarn. Situational: spatial relationships established by the artist; overall dimensions vary with each installation

board format that leans at an angle against the wall (the site of painting) while simultaneously entering into the three-dimensional realm and physical space of the viewer. "In distilling my ideas," McCracken noted, "I was doing something analogous to making poetry—trying, in a way, to say the most with the least."<sup>3</sup>

**Fred Sandback** is known for sculptures that outline planes and volumes in space. Though he employed metal wire and elastic cord early in his career, the artist soon dispensed with mass and weight by using acrylic yarn to create works that address their physical surroundings, the "pedestrian space," as Sandback called it, of everyday life. By stretching lengths of yarn horizontally, vertically, or diagonally at different scales and in varied configurations, the artist developed a singular body of work that elaborated on the phenomenological experience of space and volume with unwavering consistency and ingenuity. In his own words, Sandback described his sculpture as being "less a thing-in-itself, more of a diffuse interface between myself, my environment, and others peopling that environment, built of thin lines that left enough room to move through and around. Still sculpture, though less dense, with an ambivalence between exterior and interior. A drawing that is habitable."<sup>4</sup> On view will be a rare work from Sandback's *Mikado* series, begun in the 1990s, that occupies an entire room and is characteristic of the themes that the artist pursued throughout his career. Inspired by the chance-generated Mikado—or pick-up sticks—game, in which a bundle of colored sticks is released onto a playing surface, the work consists of seemingly random lengths of yarn that intersect each other in space, both occupying and exceeding the space of the viewer.

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<sup>3</sup> John McCracken and Matthew Higgs, "Interview," in *Early Sculpture/John McCracken*. Exh. cat. (New York: Zwirner & Wirth, 2005), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Sandback, *Here and Now: Fred Sandback*. Exh. brochure (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1999), n.p.